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interpreted. Every word has a history. Every sentence is loaded, yea, burdened with thought. Thought and words are here more closely identified than anywhere else in the Old Testament. The prophet seems ready to break down under the pressure of his theme;—viz. Glory achieved through the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah. That one theme pervades the whole. It sighs. It groans. It weeps. It moans. It almost dies. Then it strikes that highest note of victory, "It is finished."

If, now, the interpreter has performed his work well, he has passed, by identification of himself with the language, and with the thoughts of the poets and prophets, into a far higher identification. He has had a vision of the glorious truth of God. In the third place, then, the ideal interpreter of the Bible *will identify himself with the purposes of God.* His work has been progressive. Out of the materials of thought, he has constructed the thinker. As he has patiently watched these many thinkers of many times, always above them all, the eternal, self-existent Jehovah has appeared, guiding and directing his servants. While other men may have regarded His plans as mysterious and dark, the ideal interpreter sees God's purposes "ripening fast." The seeming diversity in revelation is lost in the essential unity of the whole. Many authors have become to him, one Author. Many books, one book. And the interpretation of *the Book* is found to center in the one Christ, in whom all the rays of revelation focus the words of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word was *God.*" * * "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. And the Word became *flesh* and *dwelt* among us, (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

Identification of himself with the language of God's Word, with the thoughts of God's servants, and with the purposes of God, as He has revealed them through the medium of human thought, this is the process of the ideal interpreter. He has handicapped himself with no preconceived hypotheses. His wings have not been clipped by the dogmatic shears of philosophy or logic. He has simply surrendered himself to the Bible and listened to what the Bible *says.* In this way he has become a minister of the progressive apprehension of truth. The elements of progress are not to be found outside and beyond the Word of God, but within the range of revelation. As the light that has been shining for thousands of years, is still a study and a wonder to the devout lover of God's works, so the depths of God's purposes in the government of His moral universe, as they have been shining in prophecy and promise all down the ages are still the study and the wonder of His reverent children.

W. O. STEARNS.

The Place of Incense in the Mosaic Ritual.—Moses saw incense burning on Egyptian altars, and Abraham watched in Mesopotamia the fragrant clouds ascending as a ladder from man to the immortals. Both East and West it was taken for granted that the nostrils of the exalted judges of the fate of men were pleased with delicious odors. So great was the demand for incense, that spices form the earliest articles of commerce. It was merchants in balm and myrrh that carried Joseph into Egypt. When Jehovah showed Moses the pattern of the tabernacle, in which he was to be worshipped, He pointed out between the altar of brass and the mercy seat, a small altar of shittim wood overlaid with gold on which incense was to be burned. At lamp lighting and at light extinguishing, at the time

of the morning and of the evening sacrifice, the priest was instructed to take live coals from the brazen altar, and placing them on the golden altar, scatter incense on them. This incense was a compound of the apothecary and could be used for no other purpose. Its component parts were four aromatic substances, three of them gums of shrubs or trees, namely, frankincense, galbanum and myrrh, and one probably an odoriferous secretion of a shell fish called onycha. These substances in their pure form were exceedingly rare and costly, though found in Arabia on the borders of which the Israelites were wandering. They gave forth pungent odors, which however when mixed were very fragant. Galbanum added body to the incense and its unpleasant fumes were deodorized by the rest. All four were beaten very fine, mixed in equal parts, then tempered and hallowed by the sacred salt, and, thus consumed, emitted a heavy cloud of sweet smelling savor, that floated over the veil into the most holy place. Once a year the veil was lifted and the incense was burned on a censer in the very presence of the Shekinah, whose glory was thus reverently shadowed. Incense therefore not only accompanied daily worship but also constituted with blood the only element used in the awful climax of the ceremonial of the day of atonement. In the New Testament these spices are no less conspicuous, for the wise men brought frankincense and myrrh to the infant Saviour, and the four-and-twenty elders hold in one hand harps and in the other golden vials, full of odors. The revelator tells us that these odors are prayers of saints, and the psalmist exclaims: Let my prayer be set before thee as incense. In another place he seems to have in mind the priest standing before the cloud rising from the golden altar, when he says: He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. It will not be unwarrantable spiritualizing to infer from the place of the golden altar between the altar of sacrifice and the altar of mercy, that sacrifice is the indispensable foundation of prayer, and that prayer is the necessary complement of sacrifice. The embassador must present his credentials before his communications can be delivered. Only the blood washed can offer the incense of prayer. The bloody altar of sacrifice is seen before the golden altar of incense or the golden cherubim over the mercy seat. Calvary is seen before Pentecost descends. Calvary is transfigured by Pentecost. The sacrifice was not complete until the golden altar was reached. The atonement is made effectual only by prayer. Some say "no mediator," others cry "many mediators," but we say "one mediator."

Like incense prayer is a compound, and its four elements are adoration, confession, petition and thanksgiving. They are all present in the Lord's Prayer, which is our model, and they are commonly found joined in the psalms of David. What more beautiful invitation could be given us to turn aside to pray, as the shadows gather and again as they rise and flee away, than the image of the white-robed priest approaching in the early morning and again at the cool of the day, with spices and coals of fire, the curtained tabernacle. Or choosing the figure of the apostle on Patmos, may we not ask ourselves: Is my vial full of odors, is it filling fast, or is it running so low that there is not even a scent of fragrance lingering about it?

W. W. EVERTS, JR.

Some Practical Hints.— *What Commentaries to Buy?* We refer, of course, to commentaries on the Old Testament. The question is ever recurring, and is not an easy one to answer in a summary way. The primary question is a question of